

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 This invention provides a methodology for negotiating
parameters in a distributed computing environment. The
invention may be implemented in a way which is simple,
general and robust. Leasing, deadlock detection and
starvation detection may be provided. The invention may be
applied to automatic configuration of networked devices and
their services. In one embodiment, devices on a computer
10 network provide services. In each instance where one
service imports functionality from another service a finite
state machine associated with each service is instantiated.
The finite state machines exchange messages which cause
them to progress through a sequence of states. The messages
15 contain configuration data. When the finite state machines
have reached their final states the functionality in question is
made available to the importing service. The finite state
machines enforce incremental negotiation. The finite state
machines also provide smooth recovery from errors and
20 interruptions in network availability.